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Titusville Amateur Radio Club

TARC NEWSLETTER

September 1990

President's Corner

The Novice / Technician classes are off to a great start with fourteen signed up. We could squeeze in a few more if they worked hard and caught up. We hold class promptly at 7 p.m. every Tuesday in the JayCee's building. And you *may* be tapped to help out some night.

NOTE!! This month's meeting is **Guest Night**. We will start at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 25 September, in the JayCee's building on Singleton. There will be lots of good things to eat and drink. Chicken, hot dogs, beans, salads, and other good stuff. Bring Momma, Pappy, kids, friends, and any relatives you can stand. We hope to have our entire ham class there for you to meet. We'll have a 50/50 drawing, a swap table, and dancing girls and boys. You are urged to bring some of your own special dishes to share.

Call Bud, Clyde, or Wynn and tell them how many in your party so they can prepare the right amount of food.

Editor's Desk

by Doug Reed – N4QVY

Another night, another newsletter. I've transferred all of Val's articles from IBM 5.25" to IBM 3.5" disk, then to Amiga hard drive via Kermit, with a couple of ASCII file conversions tossed in for good measure. It's a little tedious, and sometimes I wonder if I should just type it in instead. Maybe that's why Val *always* includes a printout of her files.

STS-35 is once again on hold, and once again we packet people will have to wait to "communicate" with the shuttle. I emphasize "communicate" since the entire packet QSO should take less than 15 seconds on a good day. The ground packet station will send out a "I want to make a communication connection with the shuttle" packet. the shuttle will send a "OK, you're connected to me" and QSO number packet, the ground

See **Desk** on page 3.

Upcoming Events

> **September 25** – TARC Guest Night, 6 p.m., JayCees Building on Singleton Ave.
> Every Thursday night – TARC Friendship Net, 7 p.m., 146.91 MHz (–600).
> 3rd Saturday of each month – SBARC / ARRL exams, 9:30 a.m. registration, FIT room Q11 in The Quad (under ham radio mast). For info call Bill Newkirk, WB9IVR, phone 724-6183.
> **October 12** – **Deadline** for articles to be included in the September edition of the *TARC Newsletter*.

Officers

President: Bob Nedimeyer W4VQB 269-1878
Vice President: Dick Duell W9LSD 383-9733
Secretary: Doug Reed N4QVY 268-1934
Treasurer: Clyde Lee K4EOS 267-9375

Minutes of the July 24 Meeting

Meeting came to order at 7:09:27.1415926 on 8/28/90. All members present introduced themselves. Members not present may have introduced themselves also, but they were not present so we'll never know. Rick, KM4ZI, will be moving back to Kentucky, his old stomping grounds. We will miss him, but he promises to keep in touch.

Minutes were read and approved. Treasurer's report showed expenses of stamps, repeater crystals, and an ARRL membership. Treasurer's report was approved. Members are reminded to renew ARRL membership through TARC, instead of renewing with ARRL directly. President Bob announced that, after much ado, a meeting site had been selected for the upcoming Amateur Radio Course. Our kind friends at the Jaycees offered the use of the building for the classes, which would start in 2 weeks. Press releases and bulletin board notices were available for members to help spread the word. Members were warned they may be asked to make a short presentation to the class about favorite aspects of Ham radio.

31/91 repeater report: the new receiver is in use on 91 and is doing a bang-up job, the new transmitter has been tested, and it is too darned hot to go to the hut this time of year.

444.15 repeater report: it took a nasty hit of lightening the day before Dave, WB4SIG, left for vacation. After a herculean effort, the repaired receiver, repaired transmitter, and an all-new controller board are on the air.

See **Minutes** on back

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Serious Repeater Bugs

A *Really* True Story by Wynn Rostek – WB4ZUY

As some of you may have noticed, we have installed a new repeater control package. We modified the code we had been running on the old version to add several new features. The machine seemed to work fine for several weeks after the new mods, but then we started to notice a series of strange buzzing noises getting through the machine once in a while.

On a bright saturday morning, about 7:30 am I made a trip up to the site, loaded down as usual with 100 pounds of electronic essentials in my customary four cardboard boxes. (That reminds me, does anyone have an extra cardboard box? The bottom keeps falling out of the one I keep the spare transformers, fire extinguishers and axes in.)

Once I had managed to knock enough rust off of the lock to get the key in, I opened the gate and carefully balancing the four boxes of electronics on one arm, I started hacking a path through the stickers with my trusty (but somewhat rusty) machete. (Has anyone seen the club chain saw lately?)

The stickers aren't usually too much of a problem but towards the end of the mowing season the city crews seem to get too busy to get to everything, and well, the water tank area doesn't seem to get mown between the months of May and December. What with the long growing season here in central florida and all, they tend to get a mite thick after October.

I had just finished chopping through a particularly large sand spur shoot and as it's fifty foot trunk fell slowly to the ground (taking many smaller twenty and thirty foot sand spurs with it) a huge shadow passed overhead. I looked up quickly. The shadow had passed but the air was filled with a tremendous hum. Suddenly a strong gust swept through the area, causing the boxes of electronics to teeter dangerously on my arm.

I quickly scanned the area but couldn't see what had caused the sudden disturbance. Writing it off as just one of those things that tend to happen up at the hut, I unlocked the door and shoved the cardboard boxes through ahead of me.

I looked over the repeater, wiggling all the connections to make sure everything was tight. I unsquelched the receiver and turned up the audio to see if I could detect the buzz, nothing. I kerchuncked the machine a couple of times, again listening for the buzz. I quickly came to the conclusion that it was an intermittent problem and that I was just going to have to wait for it to show up. I checked for spiders and other unwelcome guests and made myself as comfortable as possible.

There was only light traffic on the machine that morning and during the hour I sat there monitoring I never did hear the buzz. I called Dave (N4KHU) and asked him if he had heard the buzz on the repeater that morning. Dave was aeronautical mobile at the time and mentioned that he had heard the buzz once about 7:30 but had not heard it since. I was just thanking Dave for his help when the hut started booming. All of a sudden the receiver started emitting a loud, rasping buzz as a shadow passed the hut door.

I bolted outside just in time to see a dark outline drop below the trees in the direction of the airport. Dave called on the repeater to tell me that he had just heard the buzz again. I told him what I had seen and he suggested that maybe one of the pilots in the area had a problem with his radio and it was getting into the repeater.

Dave very kindly offered to fly over to the airport and see if he could find out who just landed so we could ask to check his radio. I told Dave he wouldn't have any trouble finding the guy because of the terrible racket his plane made. Dave signed off and headed for the airport.

While Dave was on his way to the airport I changed the frequency on my HT to monitor the repeater input. I had just sat the HT down when I heard the humming starting. The HT and the repeater were buzzing like crazy. I grabbed the HT and dove out of the hut, changing frequency on the way. I called Dave and told him the guy was flying right over the hut. Dave said he would be there in 30 seconds to eyeball the guy.

I looked around the sky to see if I could spot the mystery airplane. over to the southwest, very close to the tree line I spotted a dark plane heading due west. As the mystery plane dropped below the tree line, Dave appeared overhead. I told him where I had last seen the plane and Dave took off in hot pursuit.

While I was standing there watching Dave head west, the humming started again and the HT started buzzing. I thought, "Oh great, there are two of them." and turned towards the hum. My jaw bounced noisily off my sneakers. Just in front of me and approaching rapidly was the largest mosquito I'd ever seen. He must have had a 30 foot wingspan. I dove to the ground as he passed over and quickly called Dave.

I was just telling Dave that the buzzing was coming from a mosquito even bigger than the ones hurricane Donna blew up from the everglades when Dave said, "That's the baby, the one over here just dropped a mosquito control truck in the swamp!" I've lived in Florida long enough to know that we had real trouble. Dave screamed into the radio, "Oh my god, he's after me!"

I watched dumbfounded as the twin commanche was tossed in the wake of the big mosquito that had just buzzed it. Dave fought the controls and somehow managed to keep his plane in the air. I dashed inside the hut and grabbed the phone and dialed 911. I asked the operator to patch me through to Patrick Air Force base. While the phone was ringing at Patrick, I listened to the sound of Dave's twin commanche approaching as the giant mosquito banked sharply over the Indian River, turning to make a second run.

The duty officer at Patrick asked what the problem

See **Bugs** on next page.

Bugs...
was and I quickly explained the trouble Dave was in. Luckily the duty officer was originally from South Florida and knew Dave so he said they'd scramble two jets immediately. As soon as the duty officer hung up I dashed outside and called Dave to tell him help was on the way.

Dave was only a few hundred yards from the tower. A loud hum filled the air. To my horror, the giant mosquito was closing rapidly. It looked like a collision was inevitable and worse yet, it looked like I was smack in the middle of the area the debris would impact.

The mosquito would be here in a few seconds. Dave had his plane in a steep dive, trying to gain enough airspeed for some evasive maneuvers. As Dave leveled out, the sound of the two jets from Patrick came roaring across the scrub. I saw the flash of an air to air missile being launched as the lead jet dropped altitude.

The mosquito went into a steep dive and Dave banked the twin Commanche sharply and shot around the back of the water tank just seconds before the missile detonated. The whole hut reverberated with the explosion as thousands of gallons of water sprayed into the air.

Dave and the mosquito both pulled up. The jets had closed to 500 yards. A flash appeared under the second jet. I crossed my fingers as the missile streaked towards the mosquito. I closed my eyes, afraid to watch. The muffled explosion echoed off the remains of the water tower. I breathed a sigh of relief and swore to get my articles into the newsletter editor a full week before the deadline for the rest of my life.

Dave managed to get his plane down safely. He had minimal damage and was back in tip-top shape the next week. It took me about 3 hours to dry all the circuit boards and get the repeater controller up again. It would appear that it's little bath hasn't hurt it any. The fire department was able to get the blaze under control in 4 hours, they did have to cut two fire breaks with the 'dozer. (I'd never guess that mosquitos were that flammable.) We got the mosquito control truck driver back shaken but otherwise ok. The truck itself was a total loss.

I guess that all things considered, it could have been much worse. I would like to request though that in the future RF problems be referred to Les, I only do control packages.

Desk...
station will send "I received those packets OK" packets, and the shuttle will send a "I want to disconnect from you" packet, and the ground station will send a "You're disconnected from me" packet back. It takes more time to read it than to do it if conditions are favorable.

And not to forget... **Thanks to Val and Wynn for their articles**, and be sure to notice *who* did such a nice job filling in for me last month taking minutes.

Hope to see everyone at the feastival.

The Field Day that Wasn't

By Val Valek, WB4ZUZ
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Last year I wrote about what Field Day was like. This year I will write about what Field Day wasn't.

Like every year, antenna erection wasn't started on time. Not everyone was chipper and well rested, but all arrived in good spirits. Perhaps that was the problem: too much good spirits the night before.

One ham wasn't pleased to see his ten meter beam with an SWR of 2.5 to 1. The more he tweaked, the worse the SWR got. When he noticed that the driven element wasn't where it was supposed to be, the SWR wasn't a problem anymore [ed note: Ok... I confess: It was I].

The triband antenna used for 20 meters also wasn't tuning up very well. Perhaps if the traps weren't filled with water. The 40-meter beam wasn't the prettiest antenna I have ever seen, but it worked great.

Ozzie's 2-meter beam wasn't any trouble, though. It works first time, every time.

The weather wasn't any more cooperative than any other year. A brief shower cooled things off, but there wasn't a dry ham in the house. The stickers weren't as tall as last year, but they were tall enough to engage our shoelaces.

This year there wasn't just one person supplying auxilliary power, we had generators of all sorts.

For the first year I remember, the counter wasn't cluttered with extra ham equipment. We brought only what we needed. This was also the first year we weren't on the air at 2:00. Of course, we weren't required to be on the air at 2:00, we just couldn't start before 2:00.

We kicked off the festivities at 3:30. There weren't any empty seats in front of the transceivers for the first four hours.

There weren't any growling stomachs after 6:00, either. Stew, biscuits, pie, and cookies weren't going to waste. They were going to *waist!*

There wasn't any problem getting volunteers for the graveyard shift. Of course, at night 10 and 15 weren't open, but 20 and 40 got quite a workout.

In the morning 10 meters opened up and redeemed itself. It wasn't any problem to fill a sheet of 25 entries in 25 minutes.

Unlike other years, we weren't all ready to go home at 11:30. We actually stayed and transmitted for the whole 24 hours.

All the hams had a great time at Field Day this year, and I believe that we will have a respectable showing when our points are tallied. We can attribute a successful Field Day not to what it was, but to what it wasn't.

The **TARC Newsletter** is published on a monthly basis. Articles are published based on their newsworthiness to TARC membership, space available, and ease of entry to the publishing medium.

Preferred transfer methods are EMail to *Doug Reed* at Tech-Talk BBS, EMail on 2 meter packet to N4QVY@N4JLR or N4QVY@WD4HIM, direct packet, 3.5" AmigaDOS 880K disk, 3.5" MS-DOS 360K disk, 5.25" MS-DOS 360K disk, direct landline modem, and print / hand-written / hardcopy formats, in that order. Separate each paragraph with a blank line for ease of re-formatting into a publishing format.

Article / classified deadline is two Fridays prior to the date of the monthly meeting.

Articles may be given to the editor, Doug - N4QVY, at the IHOP on net nights, or left with Bud - K4CWG, where it will hopefully make its way to the aforementioned editor.

The TARC Newsletter is assembled on a Commodore Amiga computer using Gold Disk's PageSetter and LaserScript desktop publishing software and output to a PostScript compatible laser printer. Bulk printing service is donated by Brevard Office Equipment, Inc. Folding, stamping, and mailing services this month will be done by the gang at IHOP and labels will be printed up by Bud, K4CWG, who requests that any address / name / phone number corrections be directed his way. Thanks to all those involved in this maddening once a month event.

Minutes...

A recent test of our radio arrangement with TPD yielded fine results, this time with solid coverage of the entire city using hand-helds and mag mounts on simplex freq 146.2 . It was proposed that Pike might want to compile a list of available volunteers, available transceivers, and available mag-mounts.

Discussions included Melbourne Ham fest coming up Sept 8 and 9, Sarasota Hamfest on October 20 (with tail-gate section), No-Code Ham license with no phone privileges below 30 Megs, and another balloon we can monitor on 146.94 (see Florida Skip), and club tee-shirts. Bring your original artwork (including the "official TARC logo") to the September meeting and let's see what we can come up with for the tee-shirts.

September "meeting" is a pot luck dinner. Show up at 6:00 with a covered dish and your spouse, your kids, your sweetheart, and your appetite.

- Val Valek, WB4ZUZ

September Pot-Luck Dinner Meeting

TARC is hosting a family pot luck dinner in lieu of the September meeting. TARC will delight the palate with culinary excellence of haute d'ogs and a wide selection from our vintage Pepsi cellar. You'll have to provide the potato salad, baked beans, funistrada*, cookies, and pie. It's BYOB: Bring Your Own Brood (TARC could not possibly afford to provide each member with a spouse and a selection of children, so you will have to bring yours!) The more, the merrier. We hope to see a lot of new and familiar smiling faces. Dinner at 6:00 on September 27th. Be there.

* "Funistrada is a nonsense food name created by the US armed forces for use in preference surveys along with 375 real foods. The idea was to use funistrada and two other nonsense names as a control to see if those taking the poll were paying attention. In a 1974 survey 'funistrada' ranked relatively high: above such things as eggplant, instant coffe, apricot pie, harvard beets, canned lima beans, brilled bologna, and cranberry juice. The other two nonsense names used in these surveys are 'buttered ermal' and 'braised trake', neither of which rank as high as 'funistrada'. " -- from the book Words, by Paul Dickson.

Submitted by Val (who else).

Wanted: Magazine articles on solar energy, Bill Young / KB4VYH, 269-4609.

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